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“REAL,” “TRUE,” OR “GENUINE,” IN INDIAN LANGUAGES

BY ALBERT S. GATSCHET

When we desire to convey the impression that such a man is a typical Frenchman in body and mind, in manners and language, that is, an embodiment of all that is French, we mean that he is a *true* son of his country. There is nothing uncommon in this, no more than there is in the fact that the continental Greeks once called the inhabitants of eastern Crete the *Eteocreates*, or true, genuine Cretans, which meant that they had remained free from admixture with the Carian or with any other race. The same idea is expressed by the Germans when they call the Czechian, or Slavic-speaking population of Bohemia, *Stockböhmern*, for these, who form three-fifths of all Bohemians, are thereby regarded as belonging to the old and original stock of the population. The designation, however, sounds like a nickname, through its intimate analogy with terms like *stockblind*, *stocken*, *stockig*, *Stocknarr*. In the same way the application of the term “Hibernian” to a typical Irishman would sometimes be regarded as banter.

Similar designations have been found to a considerable extent in the languages of more primitive peoples, referring to persons and other animate beings as well as to inanimate objects, which bear nothing of the jocose or bantering in themselves, but are applied seriously. Some of the terms are so quaint, curious, idiomatic, and attractive, that I resolved to collect a number and subject them to careful study, regarding them as true and palpable products of the aboriginal mind.

The terms for “true” or “genuine” in most of the idioms to be mentioned are simultaneously adjectives and adverbs, and,

curiously enough, with a slight change in pronunciation or suffixion they also mean "man" and "Indian."

ALGONQUIAN

The Algonquian languages, which are among the most thoroughly studied of all the North American tongues, yield many curious instances of the intention of the natives to convey the equivalent of "genuine." The two words chiefly used by them in this sense are *lénia* or *léni*, and *intni*; both are etymologically identical, with the phonetic change from *l* to *n*, and both stand for "man" and for "genuine" with their various synonyms.

Peoria, Miami.—Among the Indians formerly settled in Illinois and Indiana, *léni*, *läni*, is the word for "real," "genuine," and *lä'nia* for "man," "male," and "Indian." But the Shawnee, whose ancient home was farther eastward from Mississippi river, use *hiléni* for all the above terms. In Peoria and Miami *läni kú'sia* is "muskrat," i.e., "the real mouse" or "the genuine rat"; *léni mahuéwa*, "prairie-wolf," literally, "the genuine wolf," or, more accurately, "the genuine jackal." *Lenaptzha* or *Länaptzhia* is a mythologic name sometimes applied to persons and totemic clans. It is interpreted "whale," "monster," "water-monster," and designates any large animal. The *Lenapizha* is said to live in the water and to become visible only when lightning strikes a lake or river. A literal rendering of the name is "the real tiger," for *ptzhi* is identical with the Ojibwe *bishiw*, *pizhiu*, "wildcat," "tiger," "tiger-cat," and would apply also to the cougar of Central America and South America. The term for "right," as opposite to "left," also contains *léni*; the Miami say *länad-shónshi anekt*, "right hand." The form *intni* is represented in Peoria, Miami, and other dialects also, but not as a substantive; it is the demonstrative pronoun "that one," "that," referring to distance (*hine* in Shawnee), whereas *untni* is "this one," "this here," close to the speaker.

Shawnee.—The Sháwanoa or Shawnee dialect of Algonquian

employs *hiléni* (abbreviated *léni*) for "real," "genuine," and the same term is in use for "man" and "Indian." *Hilen-akut* or *hilen'-áku* signifies "bow," "war bow," anciently made of iron-wood and hickory; this compound means "real wood," for in Shawnee "bow" and "wood" are expressed by the same generic noun, *áku*, inseparable from the noun that qualifies it. In the same manner the heavy arrow or war arrow was named *hilen' alwt*, abbreviated *len' alwt*, *lenalúti*, literally "genuine or true arrow," to distinguish it from the hunting arrow, bird arrow, or toy arrow. The "red man's tobacco" the Shawnee call *hiléni lthä'ma* or *hiléni ilathä'ma*; it is a mixture of badger willow bark with the leaves of *Uva ursi*, etc., and, as "genuine," must be kept distinct from the white man's tobacco. The Indian or "true" pumpkin, *hiléni wapikwi'*, was a plant of miraculous origin, for it was supposed to grow only where lightning had penetrated the earth.

Delaware.—Of the Delaware dialects the Unámi or Wonámi is accessible to us through two copious but not quite satisfactory dictionaries, from which we learn that *lenno* (plural *lennowaḱ*) is "man," "male," "Indian," and *lenni*, "genuine," "pure," "real," "original." *Lenápe*, *Lenāpi*, is an Indian of pure race, and *lenni Lenápe*, as an augmentative of the above, is the "Indian of pure descent," unaltered from his ancestors in blood or body, in sentiment or customs.¹ The Delawares applied this name formerly to themselves, for the people of every tribe believe themselves to be superior to every other. Their neighbors, the Shawnee, now call them *Lenapégi*. A certain species of fish, the "chop fish," is called *lenn-dmek*, "true fish," in the Unámi dialect; and *lennahawanink* means "at the right hand," "to the right."

Nipissing.—In the Nipissing dialect of Ojibwe, spoken on upper Ottawa river and at Oka, or the mission of the Lake of Two Mountains, there are quite a number of instances which

¹ The term *-ape*, *-api*, "standing," "erect," is an inseparable suffixed noun which occurs in all eastern Algonquian languages with the signification of "person," "man," "Indian."

illustrate the idea of "genuine." *Intni* is "man," "Indian" (plural *ininiwak*); but *inin* is "true," "natural," "genuine," or "par excellence." From the Abbé Cuoq's copious *Dictionnaire de la Langue Algonquine* the following are gleaned: *Inini kôman*, "hunting knife," carried in a sheath or scabbard, lit. "real metal"; *ininipto*, "(this horse) is a good, 'genuine' trotter"; *inin andak*, "pine tree," "real tree," lit. "tree of evergreen branches"; *inin ashkwâdyi*, "bark from which to make canoes," lit. "true bark"; *inin dsin*, "flint," "silex," lit. "real stone," "live stone"; *inin âtik* (a short), "cariboo," lit. "true or real beef or cow," *âtik* including any species of the bovine family; *inin âtik* (*â* long), "maple," lit. "the true tree," called also the national tree of Canada (*âtik* refers only to deciduous trees); *inin mîtik*, "hard wood," as oak, etc. (in Canadian French, *bois franc*, as distinct from *bois mou*); *inin Wemitigôshi*, "a Frenchman of France."

Cree.—In the dialect of the western Cree or Kinisteno the terms *inini* and *inin* appear with slight consonantal change, as *iyini'w*, "man," and *iyinato*, "true," "real," "principal." Père Lacombe, who has studied this dialect carefully and published the results in his *Dictionnaire et Grammaire de la Langue des Cris* (Montreal, 1874), gives instances of their use, from which we gather that the Cree Indians call themselves *Iyiniwok* (from the radix *iyin*, "pure" and "first"), not because they believe themselves to be the first of men, but because they regard themselves to be still in a natural state. Whether or not this is the correct explanation of the term, it is certain that *iyinato* (abbreviated *n'tôk*), which is adjective and adverb simultaneously, corresponds closely to *léni* and to the Iroquois *ônwe* below, and means "true," "real," and "truly," "really"; *iyenato iyini'w*, "a genuine Indian"; *iyenato ayamihâ-win*, "the true religion"; *n'tôk kissin anotch*, "it is really cold today"; *iyinato naspitâtuwok*, "they resemble one another extremely well"; *iyenato Wemistikosiw*, "a Frenchman from France," "a true Frenchman"; *iyenato pimâttsiwin*, "the true life"; *iyenato sominabûiy*, "unadulterated or unmixed wine."

Arapaho.—Of the western Algonquian dialects in the United States, that of the Arápoḥu or Arapaho yields a few instances of the linguistic feature occupying our attention. Here the term for "man," "male," *inen*, *hinén* (plural *inén'na*), differs from that of "genuine," which is expressed by *āthine*; e.g., the red flinty maize is the "true corn" (*āthine beshkatā*) for making hominy. *Ahāt*, "cottonwood tree," a species of poplar, is also called *athina*, or the "true tree." In the arid region the cottonwood is frequently the only tree to be found, hence *ahāt* came to mean also tree in general. *Hāthina tö-ukthethi* is "sheriff," lit. "true or real policeman," the latter vocable meaning properly "person tier." Some western tribes designate the bison by a term signifying "real bull or beef." The term for "man" has probably named also the Arapaho tribe, for *hindna* or *innāna inén* is "an Arapaho man"; *innāna issē*, "an Arapaho woman."

IROQUOIAN

Mohawk.—The language of the Iroquois of New York comprises six dialects: one of these, the Mohawk, was transferred to Canada and is now spoken at Brantford on Thames river, Ontario, and at Caughnawaga on the St Lawrence, in Quebec. In Mohawk the term *ónwe*, "true," corresponds to the *léní* and *inin* of Algonquian dialects, but it also includes permanence, stability, perpetuity, immutability, and is used adverbially as well. Thus we have *ónkwe ónwe*, "true man," which signifies "Indian" as well as "Iroquois Indian"; *ohasera ónwe*, "common candle," as distinguished from *ohaserato kénti*, "ceremonial or church candle"; *kanatarok ónwe*, "true bread," i.e., that made by Indians; *Onserónni ónwe*, "Frenchman proper," "native of France"; *Tlorhensáka ónwe*, "native Englishman."

KIOWAN

Kiowa.—These Indians do not use a special word to express "real," "principal," or "true," but they append a suffix, *-hi* (nasalized *hi'*), for the purpose, according to Mr Mooney. For

example, *tseⁿ*, animal, horse; *tseⁿhi*, dog; *gúāto*, bird; *guātóhi*, eagle; *sāne*, snake; *sānehi*, rattlesnake; *ä*, tree (*āto* usual form); *āhiⁿ*, cottonwood tree.

SHOSHONEAN

Comanche.—The term *tibitsi* appears to fulfil this function in the Comanche language; it means “true” and “very”; *tibitsi nem* is the “genuine nation,” meaning the Comanche themselves, who call all nations differing from them *átawitch*. *Tibitsi бүр* (or *per*) signifies the right or real arm; *shini бүр*, the left arm.

TONKAWAN

Tonkawe.—The Tonkawe or Tonkawa tribe of Texas, whose ancient habitat is difficult to determine on account of their former migratory habits, call themselves *Titchkan-wdtitch*, “indigenous people.” *Atak* in their language corresponds to the Algonquian *leni* and *inini*, and is used adjectively and adverbially. One of the eight Tonkawa clans is called *Titskan-wdtitch atak*, “real Tonkawas,” anciently so called; *ekwānshxo atak*, or “real horse,” is a gelding, because these were regarded as the best horses for use in battle; *niswdlan atak* is “catfish,” a species of which, found in Clear fork of the Brazos, is said to reach a length of five feet and to weigh eighty pounds. *Sénan atak* is “milk-snake,” and is called “real,” “true,” on account of its brilliant coloring; hence also its other name, *sénan taxdshe*, “sun-snake.” *Tchúxa* or *tchúxa atak* is the name of the common field-mouse, but another and rarer species is called *tchux esai* or “bogus mouse.” Adverbially the term appears in such phrases as *dkun atak*, “positively, surely a man”; *wúsh atak*, “just now”; *téna-i atak*, “long ago.” Right and left are expressed in another way: *yákwán hé-i*, the right leg, is the “strong leg”; *yákwán wdse-i*, left leg, is literally the “leg on the other side.”

NORTHWESTERN COAST LANGUAGES

Selish—*Kwakiutl*.—Concerning the languages of the Pacific states and territories I have received a few indications from Dr

Franz Boas, who has made a special study of the coast dialects. According to these, the Selish dialect of the Nlakyapamuḡ, in British Columbia, expresses the idea of real or genuine by the suffix *-o^{ne}*, and the Kwakiutl of British Columbia by *-kyas*. These terms show no affinity, however, with the word for "man" or "Indian" in the dialects to which they belong,

Chimmesyan.—Of this language, the Nisḡa dialect has *sēm* for "real," "true," and "really," "truly." Examples of its use are *sēm-gig a't*, "real men," i. e., the nobility; *sēmhala-i't*, "real shaman or conjurer"; *sēm hézuk*, "early morning"; *sēm-g'a'-a*, "to look thoroughly." The prefix *alō*, when followed by a word in the reduplicated form, means "alone," "by oneself," "by itself"; thus, *alōg'ig'a't*, "Indian," is literally "alone man."

Investigation of the languages of Mexico, Central America, and South America has yielded but few terms that can safely be regarded as parallels with the above.

Perhaps the most interesting result to be derived from what has been recorded is the close affinity between the terms for "genuine" and those for "man." There can be hardly any doubt that "man" or "male" is the primary word or concept, for concrete nouns always precede terms which express abstract ideas; therefore, the idea of "man," "human being," individualized to "man of our own tribe," must have been the prototype of the terms for "real" or "genuine."

The subject-matter of this paper gives rise to many similar problems to be solved by the comparison of terms of subtle meaning in various languages. Among these occur the questions why European languages are so fertile in augmentative forms, while native American dialects are so deficient in them; why inseparable generic nouns are much more frequent in American than in Aryan compounds; and why certain classifiers, figuring especially as suffixes to adjectives, occur so frequently, especially in the numerals, in the languages of the western continent.